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(Part B)

TITLE: POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND THE SOVIET UNION

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<i>Legislat</i>	<i>(60)</i>							
<i>Legislat</i>		<i>8.10</i>						
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58

BRITISH EMBASSY

MOSCOW

29 September 1972

M Shea Esq  
NENAD  
FCO



*Ente*  
*3/10*

SOVIET PRESS ON MIDDLE EAST

1. I enclose a translation (slightly abridged) of an Izvestia leader of 25 September on Soviet-Arab friendship. Although there is nothing spectacularly new about the piece I think it worth sending as perhaps the best example of the type of low level profile reaction to the Egyptian situation which we are continuing to see in the press here. It is also interesting as an example of the way in which the Iraqi relationship is being used as a way of maintaining the momentum of Soviet-Arab relations through this difficult period.

M J Robinson

cc:

G S Burton Esq  
Middle East Dept  
FCO

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SOVIET-ARAB FRIENDSHIP

Izvestia Leader

Soviet-Arab friendship holds a special place in modern history. It is a major factor in the growing unity of the forces of world socialism and the national-liberation movement. Its firm foundation consists in that the friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the struggling Arab peoples have gone through the test of time, become stronger in the fight against the intrigues of the forces of international imperialism and reaction, and have developed and become sounder for the benefit of the great cause of freedom and independence of nations and in the interests of peace and progress.

Only a short time ago the Arab East was still the colonial domain of the imperialist powers, who held it tightly in the vice of political and economic dependence. The Arab peoples were doomed to poverty and deprivation of all rights.

However, they had no desire to reconcile themselves to colonial rule. Under the impact of the Great October Revolution, which ushered in a new era in human history, profound socio-political changes took place in the Arab East. Independent Arab states emerged from the shambles of colonial empires, and, in the course of national-liberation struggle, the Arab peoples waged a decisive battle against both imperialist domination and the corrupt forces of internal reaction. This process of establishment and consolidation of political and economic independence of the Arab countries is difficult and encounters many obstacles. At times the forces of peace, progress, and national liberation of the Arab East have to repel attacks of the forces of aggression, reaction and oppression. But the national-liberation processes in the Arab world are irresistible.

In their efforts to consolidate national independence and social progress the Arab peoples enjoy the active political, moral and material support of the Soviet Union. They highly appreciate the part played by the first country of triumphant socialism, which, loyal to its internationalist duty, firmly and consistently conducts a policy of peace and friendship on the world scene, upholds the Leninist principles of equality of nations, and resolutely comes out against imperialism and colonialism, against all forms of national oppression.

In the period of grim trials, when Israel committed aggression against Egypt, Syria and Jordan, the Soviet Union strongly condemned the brigandage of Tel Aviv and its imperialist



- 2 -

guardians, and took up an irreconcilable stand in relation to the Israeli invaders. In a short period of time, the Soviet Union helped Egypt and Syria restore their military potentials, which had incurred losses as a result of the Six-Day War in 1967.

Soviet policy with regard to the efforts of the Arab peoples to erase the consequences of Israeli aggression was and remains clear-cut, principled and consistent. Our country in all firmness states that it is necessary to abide by all the provisions contained in the well-known UN Security Council resolution of November 22, 1967, and, above all, the main one, to the effect that the Israeli troops should withdraw from all the occupied Arab lands and that the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine be guaranteed.

This firm and consistent stand of the Soviet Union was again demonstrated the other day when Tel Aviv committed new acts of brigandry aggression against the Lebanon and Syria.

Soviet-Arab friendship is an important factor helping Arab peoples to offer a decisive resistance to the onslaught of the forces of imperialism and Zionism and defend their national independence and sovereignty. Life shows it that the tasks of socio-economic progress are fulfilled most successfully in those Arab countries which firmly counter the intrigues of imperialism and reaction and proceed along the road of progress. The peoples of these countries justly regard Soviet-Arab friendship as an important incentive facilitating their independent national development.

There are many significant chapters in the chronicle of the Soviet Union's friendly relations with the advanced Arab states. These relations already have their history corresponding to the interests of our peoples. They are sealed by such important international/legal documents as, for instance, the treaties of friendship and cooperation concluded by Egypt and Iraq with our country.

Recently the Soviet Union was receiving a distinguished guest from Iraq--President Ahmed Hassan el-Bakr. His friendly visit to our country was an important contribution to the promotion of Soviet-Iraqi cooperation. The relations which have developed between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Iraq are a vivid example of Soviet-Arab friendship based on principles of equality and respect for mutual interests.

The successful progress of Soviet-Arab cooperation adds strength to the national-liberation forces of the Arab world and weakens imperialist positions in the Middle East. The forces of yesterday resort to all means in order to drive a wedge in the relations between the Soviet Union and the friendly Arab states. Imperialism and Zionism find rotten ground in certain quarters of Arab reaction and try to turn Arab countries away



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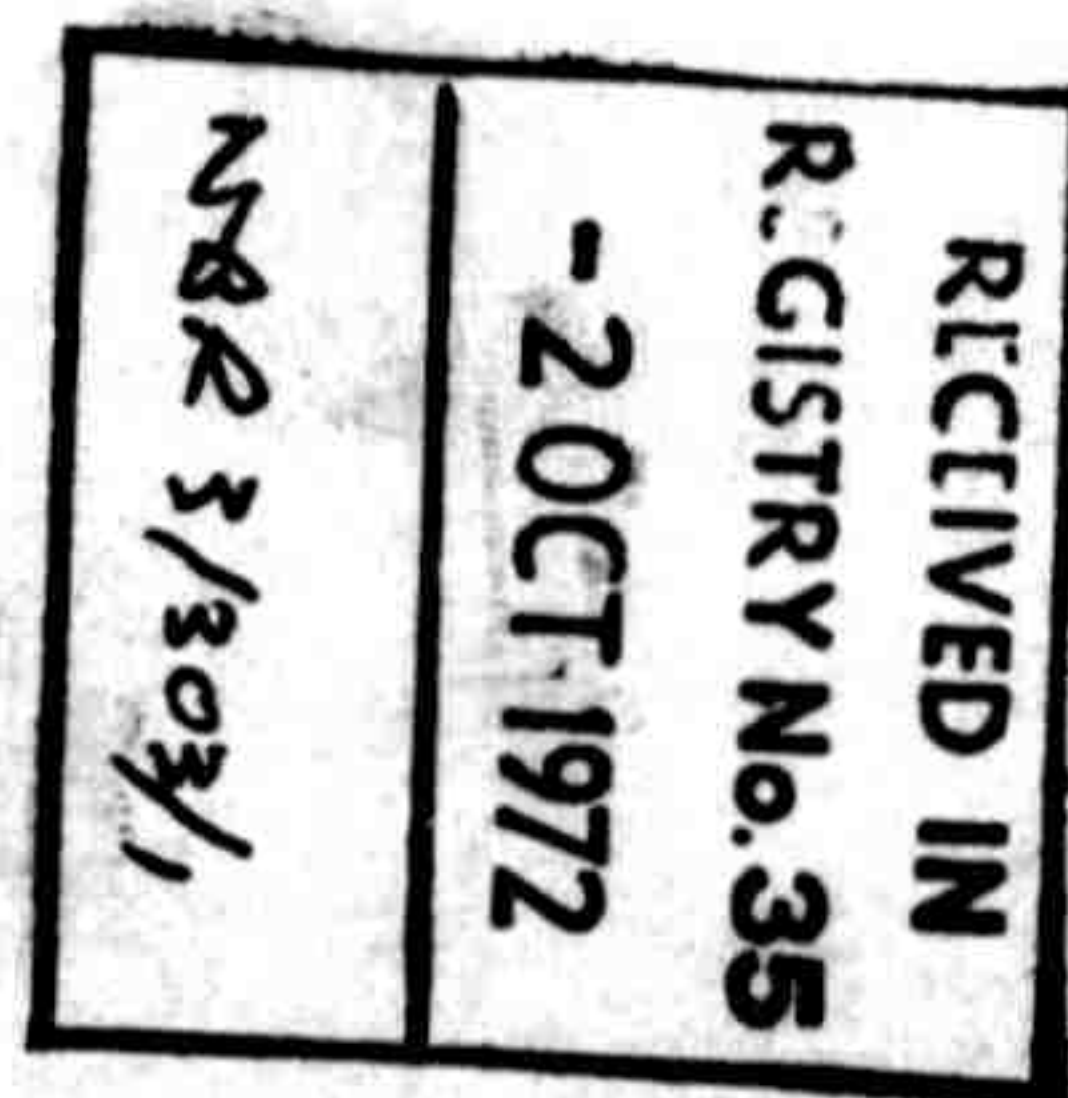
MOSCOW

29 September 1972

G S Burton Esq  
Middle East Dept  
FCO

*Dear Burton,*

SOVIET UNION/IRAQ/SYRIA



*Ente*

*Mr Smith to see*

*I agree with the conclusion  
as by.*

1. This morning's Pravda carries an interesting article by R Petrov on the social transformations currently taking place in Syria and Iraq. The article's principal interest lies in the evidence it provides of Soviet encouragement for a Baghdad/Damascus axis of progressive Arab states in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union's Egyptian policy. The writer notes the significance of the rise to power of the regional organisations of the Ba'ath party in both countries for their development along progressive anti-imperialist lines and goes on to claim "between these two parties there still exist certain differences of view; however, on basic questions concerning the struggle for liberty and the abolition of backwardness, the struggle against imperialism and Israeli aggression they share common positions." At another point in the article the writers states: "Gone is the time when the aims of the programmes of the Ba'ath parties were formulated on main nationalistic bases."
2. Such remarks not only fail to tally with our own understanding of the situation between the Syrian and Iraqi branches of the Ba'ath party but also make strange reading in the light of remarks about mutual jealousies between the two parties made to us on more than one occasion by our contact in the Middle East department of the MFA. When it comes to giving concrete instances of cooperation between the leaderships of the two branches of the party, Petrov only manages to cite their similar social programmes and their common emphasis on cooperation with the countries of the socialist world in their foreign and economic policies. He recites the usual catalogue of examples of Soviet assistance and support in the formation of an independent Iraqi oil industry and points to the importance of the conclusions of the recent talks between President Bakr and the Moscow leadership. On Syria, he states that the Soviet Union and Syria are cooperating in "geological prospecting, the transportation of oil and the construction of railways. Work is going on to widen the naval port at Latakia and a series of light and heavy industry plants are being built. Specialists and qualified worker "cadres" are being trained and help is being given in instructing the Syrian armed forces in modern weaponry and the training of military personnel".
3. The conclusion of the article does not disguise the fact that

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this process of unification of progressive forces is only just beginning. Petrov claims that Arab society is "becoming increasingly aware" of the importance of strengthening solidarity of action amongst Arab states and peoples and that "an important role in the achievement of this aim belongs above all to the progressive Arab states striving to realise their declared aims of anti-imperialist national democratic revolution". The article is none the less a clear indication of Soviet cultivation jointly of the two branches of the Ba'ath party and is I think a pointer to the future.

*Yours sincerely,  
Michael Robinson*

M J Robinson

cc:

NENAD, FCO  
EESD, FCO

Chanceries: Beirut  
Cairo  
Tel Aviv  
Tehran  
Paris  
Washington

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60

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**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**  
London SW1

Telephone 01-

M J Robinson Esq  
British Embassy  
MOSCOW

Your reference

Our reference NBR 3/303/1

Date 2 October 1972

COMMUNICATIONS WITH BAGHDAD

1. Please refer to your letter of 25 September.
2. I apologise for the confusion over this. However, despite the contents of Baghdad telegram number 126 of 14 February, we should prefer you not to copy to Baghdad classified correspondence of a political nature. If for any reason we think it necessary to depart from this practice we will ensure that correspondence is copied to Baghdad from London.
3. I am copying this letter, together with a copy of yours under reference, to Ian McCluney in Baghdad.

G S Burton  
Middle East Department

cc:-  
I McCluney Esq  
Baghdad.

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pa

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BRITISH EMBASSY  
MOSCOW

(6)

3 November 1972

3/7

G S Burton Esq  
Middle East Dept  
FCO

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- 8 NOV 1972
NBR 3/303/1

Dear Burton,

SOVIET UNION/IRAQ

1. Michael Robinson, whom I have replaced, has reported to you regularly this year on Soviet press treatment of Iraq. Pravda of 31 October carried a long article on Iraq: this was mainly of the usual gushing tone, but contained some open references to Iraq's internal problems which may interest you,
2. The Novosti translation which I enclose omitted two relevant parts of the Pravda original. At "A" the article says that independent habits and mutual alienation remaining from the past had to be overcome, and the fratricidal war against the Kurdish people, unleashed in the early sixties by the Iraqi rulers, had to be ended. Preparations were now under way for the formation of a progressive national front, into which all progressive national forces of Iraqi society must enter.
3. At "B" the authors said that the unity of national-democratic, progressive forces was developing. This was no temporary or conjectural matter: any departure from this course would not serve the interests of the popular masses, but would be to the advantage of Western monopolists and reactionaries, who had not lost hope of restoring their domination over the country. Iraqi friends of the authors had told them that the enemy was trying to worm his way into any chink, in the guise of the well-wishing businessman and American tourist, of benevolence from oil monopolies and of the feudal Persian Gulf Sheikh. Only Iraqi unity could bar the way to the plot of the imperialists.
4. This article is one of a number which have appeared recently alluding to Soviet economic help to the countries of the Middle East. The majority of references have been to Iran, Syria, and the ARE; but this piece shows that the Iraqis are not forgotten, even in the honeymoon after the Shah's visit.

Yours ever

*R M J Lyne*

R M J Lyne

cc: EESD, FCO  
Chanceries: Baghdad  
Tehran



Tuesday, October 31, 1972

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IRAQ IN PROCESS OF RAPID DEVELOPMENT

V.Nekrasov and B.Orekhov, Pravda special correspondents

The Iraqi capital Bagdad strikes you by motley colours.

A country in process of rapid development is the first definition that comes into your head. This definition was immediately confirmed by the words of our hospitable hosts taking us around the city. Here, they said, would appear the building of Iraq's General Trade Union Federation; and nearby there would crop up a building for the newspaper Al-Thawrah (Revolution), central organ of the ruling Baath Party.

Our hosts kept showing us all round: where there was a military camp during the royal regime a big recreation park for Bagdad working people was now being laid out; and this one was a large tunnel which would lessen street traffic on Bagdad's principal highways.

New buildings on every side. These projects best of all illustrate present-day life in Iraq.

Four years ago power in Iraq was taken by the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party (Baath). The revolutionary events of July 17, 1968 consolidated and developed those aspirations towards social justice which had inspired the Iraqi working people to topple the monarchy ten years before. Speaking about the immediate tasks facing the country, the Iraqi leaders formulate them in precise and definite terms: ensurance of the further upsurge and development of the national economy; consolidation of all national and progressive forces to promote national unity and progressive achievements.

Typical of present-day Iraq is consolidation of the social and socio-political forces concerned to bring to a successful conclusion the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolutionary transformations begun. On this basis, Iraqis say, the necessary conditions will be established for transition to the phase of socialist reforms.

There are three main socio-political forces in Iraq today: the Baath Party, the Iraqi Communist Party and the Kurdish Democratic Party. Cooperating with one another at government level, in local bodies of power, in economic management and in public organisations, these Parties are leading the people along the path of progressive economic and social development. Cooperation among them did not shape up overnight.

A. "It is known," member of the Baath leadership Ali Gannam said in a talk with Soviet newsmen, "that relations between different political forces in Iraq were abnormal for a long time. Much effort had to be exerted to normalise them, for which purpose certain changes were introduced into the policy of all sides concerned. The whole thing began with the



Tuesday, October 31, 1972

4

- 2 -

creation of a corresponding atmosphere. Political prisoners were released. Work was provided to all who had been deprived of it for political reasons. The reputation of these people began to be rehabilitated. Of especially great importance was the end of the war in the north of the country."

While in Iraq, we had many a meeting with spokesmen for the three political parties. They openly said that not all the differences between them had been settled and not all the disputed problems resolved. But the chief thing, they believed, was that the principles of cooperation had been determined and important results had been achieved in this respect.

B. New forms of cooperation of the progressive forces are being worked out. Being created today are such professional associations as the Journalists' Union with representatives of the three parties taking part in their activities. The class unity, we were told at the General Trade Union Federation of Iraq, becomes shaped organisationally. The country's working class has succeeded in getting united. It backs the progressive social changes and fights for their implementation. Firm contacts have been established with the working class organisations on the international arena.

People's councils are being set up these days throughout the country.

The leadership of the republic makes big efforts to develop the national industry. As we were told during the talks, Iraq is still a backward agrarian country. The share of industrial output (petroleum excluded) in the country's national income amounts to only 10 per cent. Therefore, the industrial development is attached a paramount significance. At present, say the Iraqis, the basis for Iraq's machine-building has been laid with the commissioning of the electro-technical works in Bagdad and the plant of farm machinery in Iskanderia, built with Soviet assistance.

Under the economic development plan for 1970-1974, more than 70 per cent of all the means are allotted for the state economic sector. The plan provides for a 7 per cent annual growth of the national income. Much prominence in this plan is given to the development of the collectivised sector of agriculture.

For each Iraqi the experience of the socialist countries serves as a beacon of a new happy life. The questions asked by our Iraqi friends about how the working people of our country live, how they work and relax, how they solve the arising problems took half of the time in all our talks.



This year has been especially remarkable in the history of relations between our peoples. A Party and Government delegation of Iraq, headed by Saddam Hussein, Vice-President of the Council of the Revolutionary Command, visited the Soviet Union last February. In April, during the visit of the Soviet Party and Government delegation, headed by A.N. Kosygin, to Bagdad a Soviet-Iraqi Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed. This Treaty, they say in Iraq, has created a firm international legal basis for further extension of friendship and cooperation between the two countries; it makes a substantial contribution to the struggle of the Arab peoples against imperialism, Zionism and reaction and to the consolidation of progressive socio-economic gains. Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, General Secretary of the Regional leadership of the Baath, President of the Council of the Revolutionary Command and President of the Republic of Iraq, paid an official friendly visit to our country last September. The Iraqi people highly appraise the results of this visit, the talks which al-Bakr had with L.I. Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders, and the communique signed as a result of this visit.

"We are sure", Izzat Mustafa, member of the Council of the Revolutionary Command, said in a talk with us, "that by cooperating with the socialist countries and, first of all, with the Soviet Union, we shall be able to defend the gains of the Iraqi revolution against the encroachments of imperialism and shall advance unswervingly. We highly value our friendship with the Soviet Union and regard it as the corner-stone of successes. The practice of our relations with the USSR has proved that the Soviet Union builds its relations with other peoples on a basis of principle and not on the basis of deriving temporary gains."

We were told the same by many Iraqis--workers, peasants, public figures and statesmen with whom we made friends in the hospitable land of the Tigris and Euphrates.

Bagdad, October

(October 31. Abridged.)



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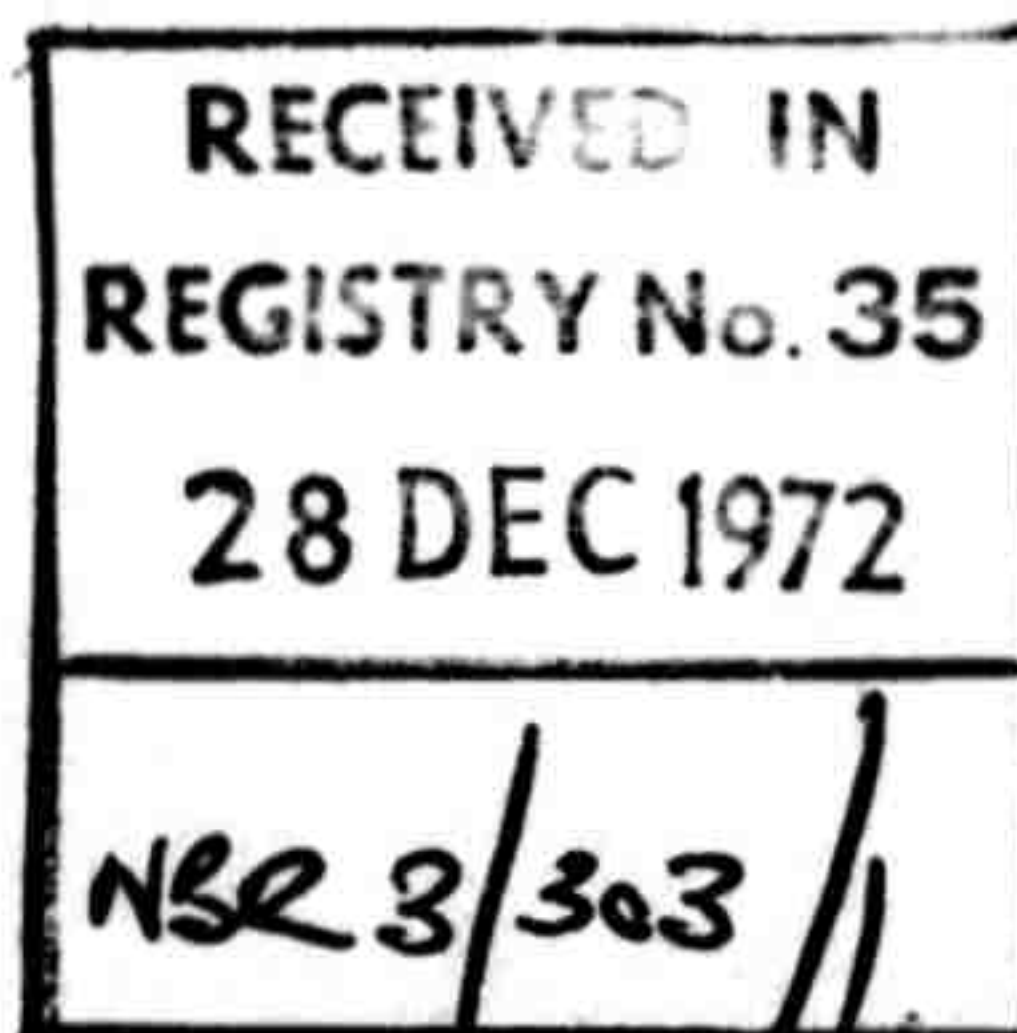


BRITISH EMBASSY

MOSCOW

3/7

G S Burton Esq  
Middle East Dept  
FCO



22 December 1972

*Handwritten notes:*  
11/12  
Copy to see on  
28/12

*Dear Burton,*

SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARDS IRAQ

1. In the course of a general conversation on the Middle East with the Minister on 18 December, Pyrlin (Counsellor and second Deputy Chief of the Near Eastern Countries Department in the Soviet MFA) told Dobbs that he regarded the division between Iraq and Syria as running very deep, although Syria and Iraq were two parts of one entity. This was not a "Ba'ath entity", for "today Ba'ath, tomorrow who knows", but an economic entity. The two states lived under very similar conditions. As an example of the mutual antagonism of Syria and Iraq, Pyrlin cited the problem of the distribution of the water of the Euphrates, which lay unresolved after many years.

2. He went on to remark that whereas the Ba'ath government of Iraq had enjoyed reasonable success with its first steps in 1968 in the international sphere, which were designed to gain support from internal public opinion for its external policy, the second step, which was concerned with domestic affairs, was proving much more difficult.

3. In general Pyrlin conveyed the impression that the Soviet Union was rather bored with the bickering between Syria and Iraq, which it found inconvenient. This is, of course, not new.

*Yours ever*  
*Roderic Lyne*

R M J Lyne

cc:

EESD, FCO

Chancery, Baghdad

LAST PAPER

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Political Relations Between Iraq And The Soviet Union. Political Relations Between Iraq And USSR. 22 Dec. 1972. MS Middle East Online: Iraq, 1914-1974: Selected files from series AIR, CAB, CO, FCO, FO, PREM, T, WO, The National Archives, Kew, UK FCO 8/1899. The National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). Archives Unbound, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107471776/GDSC?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDSC&xid=ce7f365c&pg=1](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107471776/GDSC?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDSC&xid=ce7f365c&pg=1). Accessed 11 Apr. 2022.